Archaeology 561: HRM Research Design and Methods

Dr. David Maxwell

Course Description

This course covers a variety of topics and issues in the process of conducting archaeological research in a consulting context. The biggest goal, however, is to provide students with the opportunity to develop a research prospectus for their Masters thesis. This will be accomplished through a variety of exercises and assignments, particularly those devoted to creating a research context and to creating testable hypotheses.

There is a strong quantitative aspect to this course, with a number of lectures and exercises on statistical analysis. The goal is not to create archaeostatisticians, but rather to simply ensure that students are familiar with common types of statistical analysis, and more importantly, that students understand what these approaches mean, what they imply, what they assume, and their limitations. There are no requirements to calculate anything by hand, nor will you be expected to become overly proficient in any statistical package, such as SPSS.

The workload in this course may look uneven; this is intentional. I have tried to front-load course assignments, so that the final few weeks are (mostly) devoted to writing your research prospectus.

Course Schedule

The course is divided into three sections.

Section 1, weeks 1–5, addresses quantitative approaches to archaeological data.

Week 1  The Research Process and the Research Context

Week 2  Size Does Matter. Project Scales and Research Design Scales

Week 3  Lies, Damn Lies, and Statistics: Quantifications (Part I)

Week 4  Lies, Damn Lies, and Statistics: Quantifications (Part II)

Week 5  Lies, Damn Lies, and Statistics: Quantifications
(Part III) chose these types of analysis

Section 2, weeks 6–10, addresses approaches to recording, collecting, and analyzing archaeological data.

Week 6 Sampling and Sub-Sampling The difference between random and non-random sampling and how to apply sub-sampling

Week 7 Student-presented Research Contexts How to describe research to a general audience in a short amount of time

Week 8 Operationalizing Research Questions: Hypothesis Testing vs. Description How to operationalize research questions and test hypotheses

Week 9 Collecting, Recording, and Analyzing Data Consider the types of, amount of, and how to collect data required to answer research questions

Week 10 Budgeting: Time and People Budget the amount of time and number of people required for a project

Section 3, weeks 11–13, addresses writing a research prospectus, which will form the basis of at least one chapter of your thesis.

Weeks 11–13 Research Proposals Draft and review research proposals

Course Learning Objectives

After completing this course you will be able to:

• Demonstrate the ability to assess quantitative and statistical analyses in archaeology.

• Demonstrate the ability to create appropriate and useful systems for recording, collecting, and analyzing archaeological data.

• Write a research context, create research hypotheses, and ultimately write a research prospectus.

Assignments

The course assignments are organized into three sections

1. Weekly Discussions Students write a short (300–500 word) response to the week’s theme and review and comment on their classmates’ responses

2. Assignments Students complete assignments based on each week’s theme
3. Final Research Prospectus

Students submit their final research proposal and read and submit feedback on two of their classmates’ proposals

**Required Textbook**

Drennan, Robert D.